Community Profile Maps for Alaska
"Questions and Answers"

1) Why should Alaska have community profile maps?

- <u>Information about the land in a community is needed for community planning, and project development and management.</u>   A good deal of this information already exists in some form, but is rarely available in one place or in an easily retrievable format. Local residents may not have access to land records or utility information. Outside parties may not have information about natural hazards such as flooding or the location of culturally important land.

- <u>Most rural residents and agencies can more easily discuss planning and community development when a community profile map is available.</u>   A good community map helps community leaders assert themselves in planning processes and communicate their values and community vision to groups outside the community.

- <u>Community profile maps help ensure projects are well planned.</u> There are many examples of facilities that have run into problems because information about the land was not revealed until discovered in the field or discovered years later:
    - Facilities are still located in areas subject to natural hazards such as erosion and flooding.
    - Facilities are sometimes located on lands that have Native land claims, resulting in a trespass liability to the community. Many communities have facilities that have been built on land without site control.
    - Construction on sensitive lands such as archaeological sites can stop a project for months or years.
    - The location of underground utilities may not appear accurately on maps, resulting in construction crews hitting buried lines with heavy equipment.
  Projects that are poorly planned have delays, run into problems and, as a result, cost more money.

2) Most rural Alaska communities are small. Are community maps so critical that money should be spent on mapping, rather than on the facilities or the planning process?   Many agencies doing community projects (for example, sewer and water feasibility, airport and road planning, housing and utility construction, etc.) create specific one-time maps for each project. Developing a high-quality standardized community profile map that meets the needs of many users can eliminate the need to create a new map for each project. Additionally, the digital community profile map can be shared with others and used as a base for project drawings and planning maps. A community profile map will allow more project money to be spent on facilities.

3) Don't statewide initiatives, such as the BIA State Transportation Plan, the 2000 Census or the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's Inventory of Sanitation Facilities, produce community profile maps? The production of quality base maps is an expensive task. None of the above or any other initiatives have produced quality community profile maps on a large scale. Commerce provided its community profile maps to each of the above groups. Although the groups brought a variety of Commerce maps (including digital maps) into other software systems, they produced no new community maps.

4) Shouldn't those groups that need mapping in communities be responsible for obtaining it themselves? Is a coordinated effort really needed? Development in Alaska has many players. Consequently, map information for a particular community is housed in various offices. A coordinated effort is required to bring together all the players, maps, and other related information.

5) What is Commerce's role in a community profile mapping project? Commerce's role is to help get the highest quality product for the dollar. Commerce coordinates the project with other agency mapping efforts, gathers existing digital information, prepares mapping specifications, and helps manage the mapping contracts. Agencies are willing to provide land records and digital files in exchange for access to the completed maps.

6) How are locals involved in a community profile mapping project? The community ultimately determines what information will be included on the map. A regional partner obtains the funds for the project and makes all substantial decisions, including contractor selection, how tasks are carried out, and how money is spent. Most partners require local hire for fieldwork and insist on local participation in identifying land information.

7) What do the maps look like? The maps, at a scale of 1"=100' or 1"=200', display land information on a rectified aerial photo-based map. Information shown includes, but is not limited to: land status; platted boundaries; land use (for example, public, commercial and residential improvements, boat haul-out areas, etc.); topography; latitude and longitude points (for emergency response purposes); sensitive and natural hazard areas; as-built information. Different versions of the map can be created by turning on layers or by adding more information.

8) How much do the maps cost?   For communities needing new aerial photography, ground control (which is most communities), and topographic mapping, the price is approximately $30,000 on the average. If the aerial photography and ground control exist, the cost can be less.

9) Who prepares the maps?   The regional partner hires a private contractor for the preparation of the community profile maps.

10) What about quality control?   In order for the maps to be useful for planning and design purposes, the maps must be accurate. For this reason, Commerce requires that:

- The ortho photo aerial base maps have ground control.
- The aerial photo is rectified (that is, the distortions inherent in aerial photography and the mapping of irregular land surfaces are removed).
- The maps are completed to national mapping standards and in a format compatible with the systems of potential users.

Because a community profile map is prepared with these high standards, the information on a community profile map can be used and updated indefinitely.

11) Who can use the maps?   As a result of Commerce's involvement, a community profile map is part of the Commerce's public library of community maps.